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ABSTRACT

This manual explains the role and responsibilities of case managers employed by social service agencies participating in the Takin' It to the Streets program in Portland (Oregon). It is a companion volume to "Basic Skills Training for Street Youth: A Manual for Volunteer Tutors." Takin' It to the Streets is a volunteer project designed to help street youth develop or strengthen their basic skills so they can lead more rewarding, personally fulfilling lives. The target group is street youth who do not qualify for existing educational or employment training programs, or who lack the interest or self-confidence to participate in them. The program provides individualized or small group tutoring, drop-in help or topical workshops tailored to the youth's specific interests and needs. Volunteer characteristics, training, and role are illustrated by copies of the Volunteer Tutor Job Description, the Volunteer Tutor Application, the Volunteer Agreement, and a list of the focus questions for each training module. The case manager's responsibilities, what case managers can expect from volunteers, and what case managers can expect from the Project Coordinator are discussed in detail. Checklists outlining the case manager's role in volunteer training and the matching of client characteristics to the program offerings are appended. (FMW)

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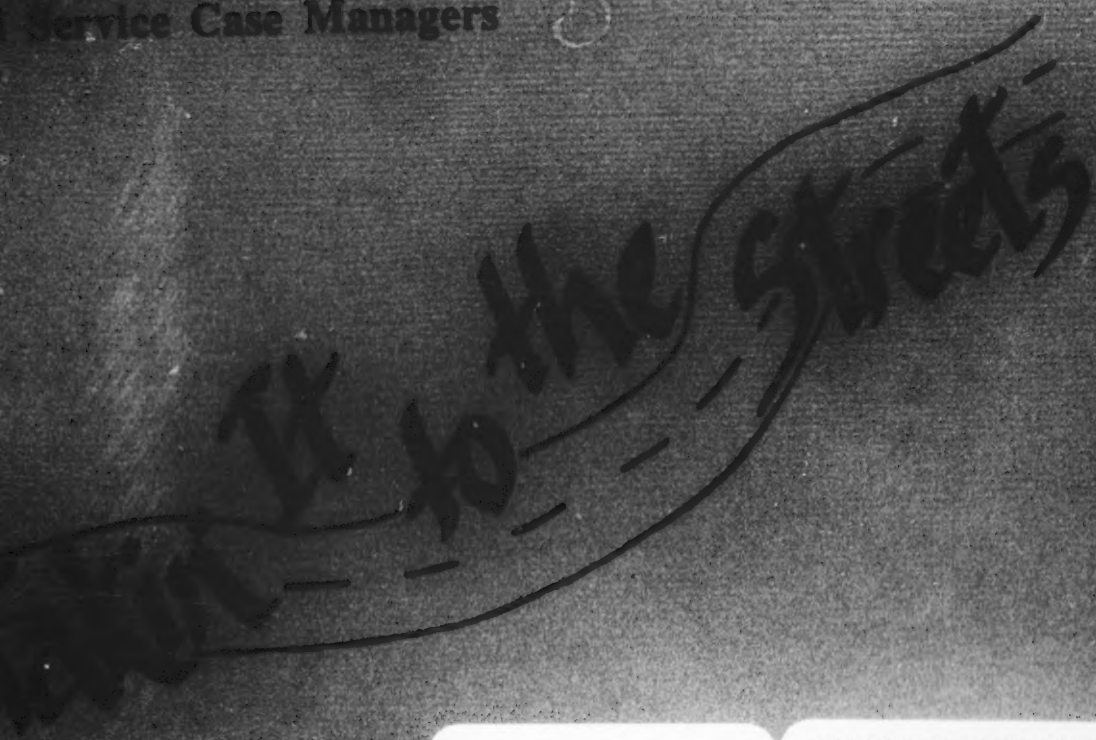
# c Skills Training
# Street Youth

## nual for
## Service Case Managers



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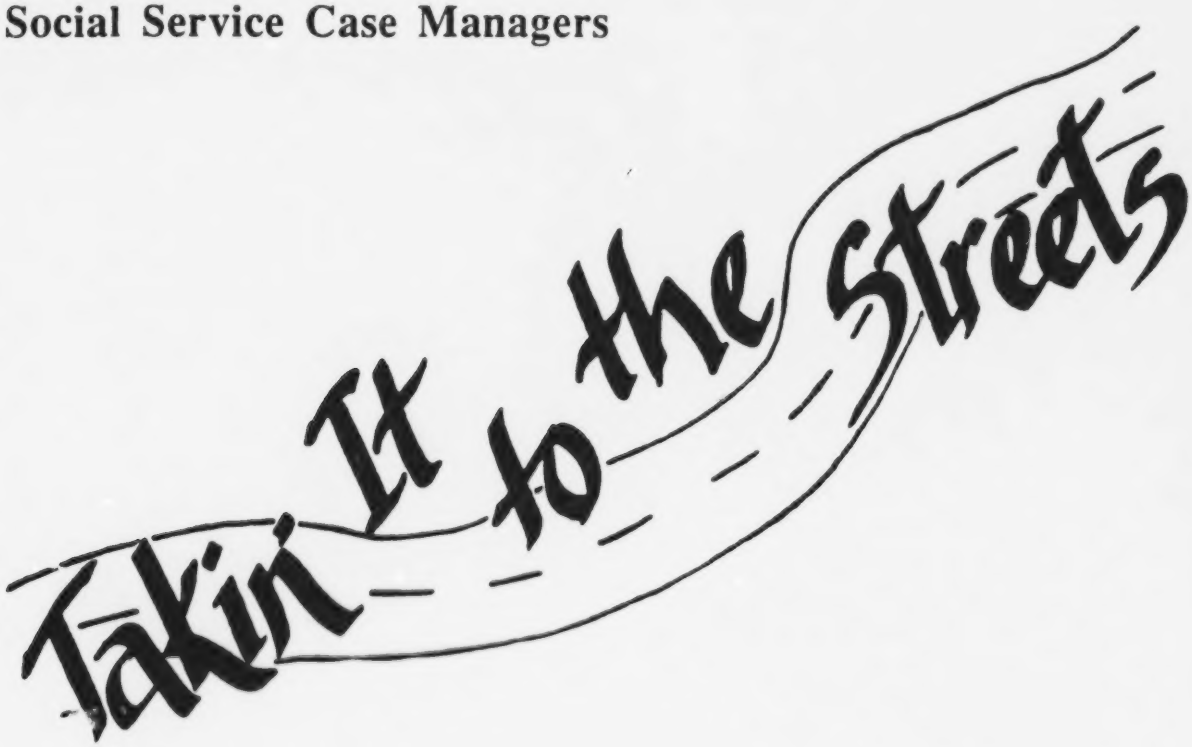
# Basic Skills Training For Street Youth

## A Manual for Social Service Case Managers

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# TAKIN' IT TO THE STREETS

## Basic Skills Training for Street Youth: A Manual for Social Service Case Managers

### Purpose of the Project

Takin' It to the Streets is a volunteer project designed to help street youth develop or strengthen their basic skills so they can lead more rewarding, personally fulfilling lives. The purpose of the project is to help empower youth -- through improved self-esteem and skills -- to be able to make their own decisions and determine their own futures.

### What Kinds of Youth Does This Project Serve?

The project has been funded by the Fred Meyer Charitable Trust to demonstrate a new approach to basic skills training for **street youth who do not qualify for existing educational or employment training programs, or who lack the interest or self-confidence to participate in them.**

As a case manager of social services for street youth, you are well aware that many youth fit this description. This project is designed especially for them -- for youth who:

- o don't have the basic skills necessary to qualify for existing youth training programs;
- o don't have the test-taking skills to be admitted to such programs;
- o don't have the interest, motivation, self-confidence to enroll and participate in available training opportunities; and/or
- o experience too many other barriers in their present lives to be able to benefit from existing forms of training (barriers such as lack of stable residence, adequate physical and mental health, supportive mentors and peers, survival level income, etc.).

### Approach

Takin' It to the Streets provides **individualized or small group tutoring, drop-in help or workshops tailored to the specific interests and needs of the youth.** Specially trained volunteers bring the basic skills training to the youth at the social service agencies where they are already receiving other services. The training is presented in ways that are interesting and relevant to the lives of the youth. This approach grew out of research conducted with Portland-area street youth and the social service agencies that work with them.

**The Thinking Behind This Approach**

This approach is based on the following premises:

- The training should take place at the youth social service agencies where street youth feel comfortable.
- Volunteer tutors should be specially trained to work with street youth and to employ this approach.
- The training should take place under the careful monitoring of the youths' case managers.
- It should be as little like school as possible.
- The training must be learner-centered to meet the needs, interests, skill levels and pace of each individual youth.
- It should be focused on functional, real-world tasks and materials that are relevant to these youths' lives.
- It should identify and build on learners' strengths.
- It should encourage collaborative learning.
- It should not be limited to one specific method or set of materials. Because every learner is different, a wide range of methods and materials may be useful.
- Evaluation of the training should focus on the **process** of interacting and learning that the youths experience, rather than on the successful achievement of particular goals.

**Types of Basic Skills Training Available**

There are four different formats for basic skills training that can be made available to street youth at the social service agencies that participate in this project. The format(s) your agency chooses will depend on the nature of your clientele and your services and on the availability of space and appropriate times for tutoring to take place.

**One-on-One Tutoring**

The tutor works regularly with an individual youth. Youth who decide to try one-on-one tutoring may have a specific goal in mind, such as being able to fill out a job application, or they may simply have a vague sense of needing to read, write or do math better. The tutor focuses on the learner's particular interests and abilities and together with him/her creates an individualized plan of tutoring activities.

**Small Group Tutoring**

This is very similar to one-on-one tutoring, except that the tutor works with two to three youth who prefer to work together. The focus is always on what the learners want to work on, not on some preconceived set of topics or "lessons."

The learners may have similar interests and needs, or they may have very different skill levels and interests but are sticking together because they are more comfortable in a group. The tutor will build on the potential of the group for collaborative learning, encouraging the youth to continue to help each other while they learn, as they do in their daily lives.

**Drop-in Helping**

The volunteer establishes specific hours when he/she is at the agency and sets up an area with interesting reading materials, games, magazines, posters, forms, etc. Youth can drop by to ask questions about reading, writing or quantitative tasks or simply stop in to talk and gradually begin to explore the possibility of improving their basic skills.

Over time some youth who have become "regulars" during the drop-in helping hours may decide they could benefit from more focused one-on-one or small group tutoring. Thus, drop-in helping can be both an immediate resource for kids and, for some, a step towards more specific training.

**Topical Workshops**

In this format a volunteer tutor presents a workshop on a topic in which she/he has some expertise and in which a group of youth are interested. Activities using basic skills are built into the workshop, within the context of the topic.

The topical workshop is a self-contained educational experience, with no obligation to attend or to participate actively once there. The activities can be completed in one session, providing an accomplishment that may be the beginning of the youths' re-engagement with structured learning.

The workshop format also has the potential to expand into a series of workshops on the same or related topics. The range of possible topics may be as wide as the youths' interests (and the volunteers' expertise, of course). Topics may include job-search techniques, recreational pursuits, creative writing, how to find an apartment, poetry writing, health concerns, specific job skills, etc.

## Volunteer Selection and Training

### How Are Volunteers Selected?

Volunteers for this project must have some special qualities. Since the key to successful tutoring of street youth lies in the ability to establish a meaningful personal relationship between tutor and youth, volunteers need to be:

- o able to communicate well with adolescents;
- o particularly interested in working with street youth;
- o sensitive to individual interests and needs;
- o good listeners;
- o flexible enough to respond to changing situations;
- o yet consistent and reliable;
- o open, honest and caring;
- o able to be non-judgmental and non-parental in their attitudes and actions; and
- o able to exhibit a solid sense of self and an understanding of their roles in this project, as well as their limitations.

Volunteers for this project are carefully screened, through interviews, references, participation in training and via a police records check. The Volunteer Tutor Job Description and the Volunteer Tutor Application on the following pages illustrate more fully what we are looking for in our volunteer tutors.

### How Are They Trained?

Takin' It to the Streets has developed extensive training materials for volunteer tutors. The content of these materials is based on our research on street youth, their uses of basic skills and their need for improved skills. We also have drawn heavily on the training and materials provided by Project LUCK for volunteers who want to work with street youth.

Volunteers attend 11.5 hours of training and receive a manual of readings and exercises to prepare them for this work. To give you an idea of the topics covered in the volunteer tutor manual, we have included here the focus questions for each module. The director of your agency or the coordinator of youth services has a copy of the entire manual. Please feel free to look it over so that you will have a better idea of how the volunteers have been prepared.

Volunteers also attend monthly meetings, during which they share their experiences and concerns and receive further training. They are also encouraged to attend other locally available training, such as that offered by community colleges, volunteer literacy organizations, and social service agencies.

# Volunteer Tutor Job Description

## Takin' It to the Streets

**A Project for Street Youth**

**Project Goals:**

Takin' It to the Streets is a new volunteer tutor project designed to help street youth develop or strengthen their basic skills so they can lead more productive, personally fulfilling lives. The project is funded by the Fred Meyer Charitable Trust.

Nearly thirty percent of Oregon's young people do not graduate from high school. Because dropouts often lack adequate basic skills, they are far more likely to be unemployed than are youth who finish school. Many of these youth left school due to pressing family and personal problems. A growing number now find themselves living on the streets of Portland, without jobs, unlikely to return to school, unqualified to participate in training programs, and often with no home to return to. Estimates of the number of "street youth" here range from lows of 300 to 500 (as reported by the city police) to several thousand (as calculated by social agency personnel who are in regular contact with the population).

To re-engage these youth in the learning process, Takin' It to the Streets provides highly individualized tutoring tailored to the specific interests and needs of the learners. As a volunteer tutor you will receive special training to work with street youth and learn to tutor basic skills in ways that are relevant to these young people's lives. You will then begin to tutor at the social service agencies where street youth have established contacts and feel comfortable. Tutoring may take several forms:

- Ongoing one-on-one tutoring;
- Regular hours "on call" at a center where youth can drop in with particular questions or general requests for tutorial assistance; or
- Group workshops on particular topics of interest.

Once a month, or as needed, you will have the opportunity to meet with other tutors and project staff to share methods and materials, what works for you, problems that might crop up and ways to deal with them.

**Tutor Qualifications:**

The key to success in working with street youth lies in establishing a meaningful personal relationship between tutor and youth. We are looking for volunteer tutors with the following qualities:

- Sincerely interested in helping street youth broaden their horizons and strengthen their skills
- Sensitive to the interests and needs of learners and willing to adapt materials and methods to fit each individual

- o Experienced in literacy tutoring, or willing to be trained
- o Experienced in working with street youth, or willing to be trained
- o Caring, patient, open and honest
- o Consistent, responsible and reliable
- o Willing to make at least a 6-month commitment to this project

**Responsibilities and Approximate Time Commitments:**

To help you plan your time and determine your availability to tutor with this project, we have made some estimates of the time it will involve.

Orientation and Training:

| | |
|---|---|
| o Interview with project staff | 1/2 - 1 hour (one time only) |
| o Attend initial training and orientation sessions | 8 - 10 hours (one time only) |

Tutoring:

| | |
|---|---|
| o Tutor regularly (drop-in or one-on-one) minimum 2x/week for 2 hours | Min. 4 hours per week |
| or: | |
| o Prepare and present workshop(s) (May vary, from one stand-alone workshop to weekly workshops) | Approx. 4 hrs. per workshop (including preparation) |

Management:

| | |
|---|---|
| o Attend monthly tutor support meetings and additional basic skills training sessions as needed | 2 hours per month |
| o Keep journal and records of participation | 1 hour per month |

**Contact:**

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer tutor with Takin' It to the Streets, please fill out the enclosed Volunteer Tutor Application and return it to:

Karen Reed Green, Coordinator
Takin' It to the Streets
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 S. W. Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, Oregon 97204
Phone: 275-9590



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# Volunteer Tutor Application

## Takin' It to the Streets

**A Project for Street Youth**

**Name:** _____ _____ _____
First Middle Last

**Home Address:** _____ **Home Phone:** _____

_____ **Work/Msg. Phone:** _____

**Interests and Experience**

**Why do you want to tutor street youth?** _____

_____

_____

_____

**Please describe any experience you have had:**
**(Attach an extra page if you need more space.)**

1. **Working with street youth** _____

_____

_____

2. **Teaching/tutoring youth (and/or adults)** _____

_____

_____

3. **Teaching/tutoring literacy or basic skills** _____

_____

_____

4. **Other volunteer experience** _____

_____

_____

5. **Other training that may be useful to you as you tutor** _____

_____

_____

Which of your personal qualities or skills will be of greatest benefit to this program? (Please list at least two.) _____

_____

_____

_____

Please list three things you expect to gain from participating in this program. _____

_____

_____

_____

In this project, you will be involved with youth who have dropped out of school, have been living on the streets, and possibly have been involved in drug abuse, prostitution or other types of crime. You will be presented with a wide variety of circumstances and values. To help us in your placement with the project, please indicate your feelings about working with each of the categories below. Use the following code:

1. I would be comfortable.
2. I would be comfortable, but with some difficulty.
3. I would be uncomfortable.
4. I would not like to work with this category.
5. I'm not sure how I would feel.

Socioeconomic status:
____ Upper
____ Middle
____ Lower

Ethnicity:
____ Anglo
____ Black
____ Hispanic
____ Native American
____ Asian

Sex:
____ Male
____ Female

Sexual Preference:
____ Heterosexual
____ Homosexual
____ Bisexual
____ Unclear

Age:
____ Under 16 years old
____ Over 16 years old

Other:
____ History of physical/sexual/mental abuse
____ Drug/alcohol problems
Criminal background:
____ Theft/burglary
____ Drug-related
____ Physical violence

In a brief paragraph, please explain why you feel that basic skills training is important for these youth. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Personal Information

What is your age? Please circle one:

25 or under  26-35  36-45  46-55  56-65  Over 65

What is your educational background? Please circle last year completed:

Middle School: 6  7  8

High School: 9  10  11  12

College: 1  2  3  4

Graduate School: 1  2  3  4  +

Degrees: _____

_____

What is your primary occupation? _____

_____

If presently employed, who is your employer and what is your position? _____

_____

_____

_____

Please briefly describe your hobbies, recreational activities and other interests. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Availability

If you have not been trained specifically to tutor basic skills or to work with street youth, are you willing to participate in such training?

____ Yes ____ No

How much time can you commit to this tutoring project?

____ hours per week for ____ months

What days and times do you prefer? Please circle:

M T W TH F S S

Morning Afternoon Evening

Do you have access to a car? ____ Yes ____ No

Are you near public transportation? ____ Yes ____ No

It is standard procedure for agencies dealing with minors to conduct police records checks on all personnel and volunteers. Are you willing to authorize a police records check on yourself?

____ Yes ____ No

Are you willing to check in weekly and meet monthly with the project coordinator and other tutors to share ideas about the tutoring process and progress?

____ Yes ____ No

Please list three personal references (Name, Title, Address, Phone):

1. _____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

3. _____

_____

_____

How did you hear about this program? _____

_____

## MODULE ONE

## WORKING WITH STREET YOUTH

Developing trust and mutual respect are critical elements in success in any work with street youth. Once you have become more familiar with who street youth are, the family situations they have come from, and why these young people find themselves on the streets, you will be in a position to judge how well you will be able to work with them.

**FOCUS QUESTION 1: Who are these youth and why are they on the streets?**

**Outcome:** A list of the three most important facts you learned about street youth.

**FOCUS QUESTION 2: What is street culture and how does it affect how I would work with youth?**

**Outcome:** A list of five important concepts about street culture and ideas of how you would use each as you start working with youth on their basic skills.

**FOCUS QUESTION 3: How are street youth like and not like other adolescents?**

**Outcome:** A list of three concepts about street youth as adolescents and ideas on how you would apply the concepts to basic skills training.

**FOCUS QUESTION 4: What can I expect in working with street youth?**

**Outcome:** A self-assessment that will become a part of your application to work with the Takin' It to the Streets project.

## MODULE TWO

## LITERACY SKILLS OF SCHOOL NON-COMPLETERS AND LITERACY PRACTICES OF STREET YOUTH

In order to work successfully with street youth, it is important that you are familiar with the range of literacy skill levels you might encounter, the literacy skills youth would need to function successfully as adults, the ways in which street youth use oral and written language, and their attitudes about literacy.

**FOCUS QUESTION 1: What levels of literacy skills might be expected in youth who do not complete school?**

**Outcome:** A list of three most important facts learned about skills of youth out-of-school.

**FOCUS QUESTION 2: What literacy skills are required to prepare youth for urban life?**

**Outcome:** A list of literacy skills you think you would need if you were living on the streets.

**FOCUS QUESTION 3: What functions does literacy play in the lives of street youth?**

**Outcome:** A selection of three literacy activities common among street youth that you think you could incorporate into basic skills training.

**FOCUS QUESTION 4: What attitudes do street youth have toward literacy?**

**Outcome:** A list of suggestions for approaching youth with the need to develop skills, while supporting the youths' need to appear competent.

## MODULE THREE

## BASIC SKILLS TRAINING: APPROACHES FOR STREET YOUTH

In this module we describe appropriate basic skills training for street youth and help you choose the training format that will be best for you as a volunteer. First we review the reasons that street youth do not participate in existing educational programs. Next we describe the types of social service agencies where these youth can be reached with appropriate training. Then we describe four formats for the training and help you decide which one you prefer.

**FOCUS QUESTION 1: Why don't street youth participate in existing educational programs?**

**Outcome:** A list of essential characteristics for an educational program that would attract them.

**FOCUS QUESTION 2: Where can street youth be reached?**

**Outcome:** A list of characteristics of youth social service agencies that make them appropriate places for basic skills training for street youth.

**FOCUS QUESTION 3: What are formats for basic skills training that might be used in different agencies and which is best for me?**

**Outcome:** A list of the pro's and con's of each format for you and a chart showing the format(s) you prefer.

## MODULE FOUR

## DETERMINING AN AGENCY SITE FOR YOUR WORK

Takin' It to the Streets provides a clear and simple procedure for you to follow as you confirm your placement, prepare for, and begin your tutoring. This module walks you through these organizational steps.

**FOCUS QUESTION 1: How does the project coordinator match volunteers with youth-serving agencies?**

**Outcome:** A list of issues to be explored with your contact at the youth-serving agency.

**FOCUS QUESTION 2: How will I decide if the potential placement is right for me?**

**Outcome:** A set of criteria by which you can judge the appropriateness of the site for you.

**FOCUS QUESTION 3: How do I finalize my agency site and get started?**

**Outcome:** A volunteering agreement, reviewed by the coordinator and shared with the agency.

## MODULE FIVE

## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE: BASIC SKILLS TRAINING TECHNIQUES

Everything in this volunteer training manual up to this point has been preparing you to work with street youth at the social service agencies where they can be reached. This module focuses on the actual basic skills training you'll be providing the youth. First we walk through the things you'll want to accomplish during your first session with your learner(s). Next we discuss what you'll need to do to prepare for subsequent training sessions. Then we focus on special strategies for planning topical workshops or drop-in helping. And finally we describe guidelines for evaluating the training you provide.

**FOCUS QUESTION 1: How should I prepare for my first session with the youth?**

**Outcome:** A plan for the first contact with your learner(s).

**FOCUS QUESTION 2: What should I consider in planning subsequent training sessions?**

**Outcome:** A set of planning strategies that will help you respond to your learners' needs and interests and provide meaningful, useful and attractive basic skills training.

**FOCUS QUESTION 3: What special planning strategies will I need to be able to present a topical workshop or set up drop-in helping at an agency?**

**Outcome:** Specific strategies necessary for planning workshops and drop-in helping.

**FOCUS QUESTION 4: How do I evaluate my work with these youth?**

**Outcome:** A set of guidelines to follow as you review the results of your sessions.

## MODULE SIX

## SUPPORT SERVICES FOR VOLUNTEERS

As a volunteer basic skills tutor working at youth social service agencies, it is essential that you respect the limited time of agency personnel. This module delineates the nature of your contact with agency counselors and suggests when it is most appropriate to first contact the project coordinator. Here we also describe the support services you may expect from the project, through consultations with the coordinator and monthly volunteer meetings.

**FOCUS QUESTION 1: What contact should I maintain with the agency counselor?**

**Outcome:** An understanding of the parameters of your interactions with the agency counselor.

**FOCUS QUESTION 2: What contact should I maintain with the project coordinator and other volunteers?**

**Outcome:** An understanding of what you can expect from the project and the importance of your role in improving the design and delivery of basic skills training for street youth.

## Roles and Responsibilities: How Will We Work Together?

For this basic skills training to be successful -- that is, appropriate, useful and attractive to street youth -- it is essential that all of us, the volunteer tutors, agency case managers, and project coordinator, clearly understand our roles and responsibilities. It is equally important that we communicate with each other regularly, openly and clearly so that the best interests of each youth can be served.

This project has been designed to provide a service to the youth at each participating agency without disrupting current services or adding extra work to agency staff's already heavy workload. Volunteers have been trained to be aware of the numerous demands on agency staff time and to understand and respect the boundaries of responsibility in dealing with the youth. They will rely on the Takin' It to the Streets coordinator as a first resource when questions arise. Therefore, the amount of your time needed to make this basic skills training a success should be minimal and fit in with your other case management activities.

### You Have an Important Role to Play

You are the one closest to the youth. You work hard to establish and maintain a relationship of trust and communication with individual youths. That relationship enables you to know something about their interests, concerns, and educational and training past experiences.

It will be important for you to be involved in referring youth, when appropriate, to the basic skills training offered by this project. It will also be essential that you monitor the youths' reactions to the training. This is especially necessary to protect the relationships you have carefully developed with the youths.

### The Volunteer Agreement

Each volunteer signs an agreement which lists the services he/she agrees to provide. The agreement also lists the support that you, as agency staff, and the project coordinator will give the volunteer. The agreement form, thus, is a clear illustration of the team effort that this project represents. You'll find a copy of the form on the following page.

Let's briefly walk through the responsibilities of each member of this team. We'll start with how you can help make this training useful to the youth you serve. (At the end of this manual you will find a checklist which summarizes your role in the provision of this basic skills training.)

### Agency Staff Role: What You Can Do to Make This Training Valuable

**Host the volunteer's initial visit.** The first step of your participation in making this basic skills training available and useful involves the volunteer's initial visit to your agency. The project coordinator will have discussed the type of training appropriate for your clientele with your agency's director or youth services coordinator. A suitable volunteer (or volunteers) will have been identified. He/she will make an appointment to visit the agency.

**TAKIN' IT TO THE STREETS**

**VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT**

## I. SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BY THE VOLUNTEER

The volunteer agrees to:

(1) provide basic skills training for a minimum of six months according to the terms below;
(2) respect the confidentiality of information about the youth;
(3) respect the rules and regulations of the host agency;
(4) maintain a log of contacts and training sessions provided and share it regularly with the agency and the coordinator; and,
(5) participate in monthly volunteer meetings.

Format: _____ One-on-one tutoring
_____ Small group tutoring
_____ Drop-in basic skills helping
_____ Workshop on _____

Time commitment: _____ hours per week

At _____ (time) on _____ (days of week)

Youth to be served:

Name(s) (if known): _____

Number: _____

Special characteristics: _____

_____

Location of training, if other than the agency: _____

_____

## II. SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE AGENCY

The agency will support the basic skills training by:

(1) providing facilities, and
(2) providing staff to:
  (a) recruit/select youth to participate;
  (b) introduce the volunteer and the youth;
  (c) provide information on the youth's basic skills and educational achievement and goals, as available;
  (d) monitor the youth's responses to training; and,
  (e) collaborate in evaluating the training.

Facilities: Space: _____

Equipment: _____

_____

Learner recruitment/publicity: _____

_____

Initial introductions to youth: _____

_____

Monitoring of youth's responses to tutoring: _____

_____

Contact person's time:

Initial meetings: _____

Monitoring youth's responses (part of case management): _____

_____

Circumstances for additional contact: _____

_____

Evaluation after _____ sessions: _____

_____

## III. SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE PROJECT COORDINATOR

The coordinator will:

(1) facilitate volunteer placement;
(2) monitor the basic skills training via "check in" calls (at least two the first month and one per month thereafter) to volunteer and to agency;
(3) conduct monthly trainer group meetings;
(4) provide technical assistance with literacy issues and diagnosis;
(5) provide limited materials as individually agreed; and,
(6) evaluate the training.

Monthly trainer group meetings, taking place at:

Location: _____

Time: _____

Technical assistance with literacy issues: _____

_____

_____

Materials: _____

_____

_____

Diagnostic expertise: _____

_____

_____

* * * * * * * * * * *

The volunteer understands that this agreement in no way establishes an employee/employer relationship between the volunteer and NWREL nor between the volunteer and the social service agency where he/she is placed. The volunteer further understands that neither NWREL nor the social service agency at which he/she volunteers is able to provide any primary insurance coverage. The volunteer accepts the conditions of volunteer work at his/her own risk.

SIGNED _____ _____
Volunteer Date

This visit is important -- both for the volunteer and for you. It provides an opportunity for you both to determine how appropriate the agency/volunteer match is before any relationship with the youth is initiated (thus avoiding false starts and disappointing disruptions in training). The volunteer will be making sure that he/she will feel comfortable volunteering in this setting.

The volunteer will also want to clarify with you some of the details about the support you and the agency will be providing. Page 2 of the Volunteer Agreement lists items the volunteer will discuss with you. (The form provides space for him/her to make notes about your conversation.) These items are things you can do to help ensure that this training experience is a positive one for the youth you serve. We describe them in detail below.

**Recruit/select youth to participate.** Your help to spread the word and encourage youth to participate in this basic skills training is essential to its success. How you do this will vary a little depending on the training format:

- **One-on-one or small group tutoring**: You will be the one to identify individuals who might be interested in having this kind of individualized, focused tutoring. Please remember -- a youth does not need to request basic skills tutoring to be a likely candidate for this type of training. And the way you talk about it may well influence his/her interest. It does not have to be described as "basic skills" if that is a turn-off. The volunteers are trained to focus on the immediate interests or needs of the individuals and to present the tutoring in ways that are not only palatable, but relevant and stimulating.

  Of course, anyone with specific basic skills goals, such as pre-GED preparation or specific reading or math skills problems, should be referred for this tutoring. However, many other youth could benefit from this as well -- youth who want to work on job search skills, getting a driver's license, or improving their reading skills so they can read to their toddler, for example.

- **Drop-in helping or topical workshops**: If your agency is hosting either or both of these types of training, you can spread the word that these opportunities exist, tell your clients a little about the topics or activities to spark their interest, remind them when the activities take place, and encourage them to check them out.

  This format may be particularly useful for working with youth who:

  - do not have regular schedules or are unwilling or unable to commit to a schedule;
  - are reluctant to acknowledge that they need to improve their skills;
  - are unwilling to participate in any training remotely resembling school;
  - are uncertain about making contact and working with new adults;

- have a specific literacy task with which they need immediate assistance; and/or

- have specific basic skills related questions that don't require tutoring over time.

At the end of this manual you will find a checklist of participant characteristics to help you decide what training is appropriate for your clients.

**Introduce volunteer and youth (for one-on-one or small group tutoring only).** As the youth's case manager, when you and the youth have agreed that he/she wants to try out individualized tutoring, it will be up to you to (a) notify the project coordinator and consult with him/her in matching the youth with a volunteer, and then (b) introduce the volunteer and the youth.

**Provide information on the youth's educational and skill background and goals, as available.** Any information that you can share with the volunteer about the youth's experiences with education and training, his/her skill levels (as told to you or as you've observed), specific interests, hobbies, goals will be very helpful in planning the individualized basic skills training.

The volunteers are trained to respect client confidentiality, and they sign the Volunteer Agreement, which specifically states that they will do so. They also understand that in some cases you may not be able to share personal information about your clients. However, whenever possible, any information you have that is relevant to the basic skills training for your client clearly will facilitate the provision of useful, appropriate training.

Here are some items of information that are important to the volunteer's planning and to the actual basic skills training:

- o last grade completed;

- o history of education and employment training experience (including attempts to enroll, withdrawals, etc.);

- o any goals (no matter the topic, both immediate and long-term);

- o specific interests (topics or materials the youth has expressed or shown interest in); and

- o any "red flags" -- anything to be avoided if at all possible.

**Monitor youth's responses to the training.** As you well know, this step is critical, both for the success of the training and for the continued involvement of the youth in other services you have to offer. Volunteers have been alerted to the importance of doing nothing that will in any way jeopardize the existing relationship that the youth has with the agency. You will undoubtedly be watching the youth's reactions to the new tutoring situation. **Let the project coordinator know immediately if problems arise or if the tutoring would be more effective if something could be done in a different way.** Your monitoring and input is essential to making this training useful for the youth.

To help you in this monitoring, the volunteer will turn in a brief log of each training session immediately after it takes place. (See the Log form on the following page.) This does not imply the need to discuss the training with the volunteer each time. Rather, the log is a way to keep you current on the interactions of the volunteer with the youth you are case managing. You'll know who participated on that specific day, and what topic(s) and activities were covered. You can then follow-up as needed in your next meeting with each youth, checking his/her perceptions of how things went and what else should/could be done.

As part of the monitoring, you will also be the appropriate person to relay messages between the youth and the volunteer. Although changes in schedule are to be avoided, if either the youth or the tutor cannot make an appointment, he/she will know to leave a message with you.

As the training progresses, it will also be important for you to watch for changes in specific interests or the emergence of certain skills needs. If you hear mention of new topics or particular materials you think the volunteer might incorporate into the training, be sure to make a note and pass on the information to the project coordinator or to the tutor directly if convenient.

Also, if at any time you feel the need to interrupt the training schedule, postpone or terminate training for a particular youth, let the project coordinator know right away.

**Collaborate in evaluating the training.** By monitoring your clients' responses to the training, you are already helping to evaluate it. In one-on-one or small group tutoring, the volunteer will need to meet with you occasionally to discuss how the training is going. It's up to you to determine how often you want to meet. At a minimum, you should meet once a month. Since street youths' schedules and life circumstances change rapidly, you may decide to meet briefly every two weeks. If you want more frequent contact, you can arrange it with the volunteer.

**What You Can Expect of the Volunteer(s)**

The Volunteer Agreement lists the services project volunteers have agreed to provide and the terms under which they are volunteering.

**A 6-month commitment.** Each volunteer has agreed to provide basic skills training for street youth for a minimum of 6 months. As noted above, this may be done in one of several formats. The frequency of the training will depend on the format and on the preferences of each agency and its clientele. For one-on-one or small group tutoring, the
volunteer will usually meet with the youth twice a week for an hour or two. Drop-in helping may be offered for 3 hours, once or twice a week. If there are several volunteers interested in providing drop-in help at your agency and you have space available, it may be possible to offer drop-in help several days a week. Workshops can be offered once or twice a week, depending on the topic and the level of interest among the youth.

## TAKIN' IT TO THE STREETS LOG

Date: _____

Hours: _____

Learner(s): _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Activity: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Volunteer: _____

**Respect for confidentiality.** To increase their understanding of the problems, concerns and interests of your clients, volunteers have received training about the background and daily life circumstances of street youth. They have also received explicit guidelines about what is expected of them as volunteers and the need to recognize the limitations of their training and expertise. Volunteers do not need to know about the personal histories of the youth they work with, nor do they expect to. If the youth do share parts of their lives with them, the volunteers have also been trained about the extreme importance of respecting the confidentiality of any information about these young people.

**Respect for agency rules and regulations.** The volunteer training also includes the need to respect the host agency's rules and regulations. Volunteers realize that they have been invited to the agency site. At their initial visit they will ask you if there are any specific rules or regulations they should know about.

They have been alerted to the fact that you may have policies about smoking, food and drink, weapons and physical shows of violence. You will want to explain any particular rules. Especially, be sure to let them know what you prefer them to do in case of emergency. (The training covered the need to request help immediately in an emergency, but you may have specific codes or procedures you'll want to explain.)

**An activity log to keep you informed.** As discussed above, for one-on-one and small group tutoring you can expect to receive a brief log of who participated and what was covered every time the volunteer meets with one of the youth you case manage. For drop-in help and topical workshops, the volunteer will have a sign-up list which he/she will then turn in to whoever is the agency contact for that activity.

**The best interests of the youth to be top priority.** The basic skills training approach used by Takin' It to the Streets is learner-centered. That means that the volunteers must try to be very sensitive to their learners' interests, skill levels, needs, motivations, problems, dislikes, etc. They must be flexible enough to change tactics mid-stream if they realize that what they had planned is not working or the need has changed radically since the last meeting.

Therefore, you can expect them to listen carefully both to the youth with whom they are working and to you, as the case manager. In your meetings with the volunteers, they will look to you for feedback from the youth's perspective or your experienced view and for suggestions about new topics and materials that may be especially relevant because of some new development in the youth's life or in this week's plan. You can also expect that they will make an effort to use what you suggest, to incorporate it into their work with the youth.

**Continued commitment to improving tutor skills.** Each volunteer is required to participate in monthly volunteer meetings. Part of the function of those meetings is to provide a forum for volunteers to continue to improve their skills. As they gain experience working with street youth, they will identify areas where they need more training or more information. Because they strive to do the best they can for the youth, you can expect them to search out new or improved ways of doing things, new materials, new activities.

**What You Can Expect of the Project Coordinator**

Takin' It to the Streets cannot succeed without a team effort. To provide truly useful and appropriate basic skills training for street youth requires the commitment and collaboration of all parties involved -- the volunteers, the agency staff, the project coordinator, and last, but not at all least, the youth themselves.

Nevertheless, the project coordinator is ultimately responsible for the operation and evaluation of this project. You can expect the coordinator to be accessible and available to you when the need arises. She welcomes your involvement in this project and respects your professional judgment on effective ways to serve street youth. In addition, you can expect her to fulfill the responsibilities described below.

**Help with volunteer placement.** In the case of one-on-one or small group tutoring, the coordinator will work directly with you to match volunteers and youth. You will know the needs of the individual youth; the coordinator will have a sense of the style and background of the potential tutor. Together you will determine the fit.

If, after a few meetings, the match appears to be inappropriate or uncomfortable for the youth, you can contact the coordinator. She will notify the volunteer and try to arrange another placement, for both the volunteer and the youth (if you think that is appropriate). Similarly, if a volunteer has unusual difficulty in a placement he/she will discuss it first with the coordinator, who will try to find ways to help the volunteer work it out. If this is not possible, the coordinator will contact you to explore other options for the youth. (Volunteers have been trained to know that they may need to go the extra mile with the young people with whom they are working. They will not lightly consider breaking off a tutorial relationship.)

You can also expect the coordinator to screen, train and place new volunteers as groups are recruited.

**Monitoring of basic skills training.** The coordinator will keep a close watch on the training process, particularly when volunteers are first placed. She will contact both the volunteer and you at least two times during the first month of tutoring to make sure that things are going well. After that, you can expect a call monthly, unless something comes up. If you need to talk with the coordinator, however, you should not feel you must wait for her call. Rather, you should contact her directly whenever there is a need.

**Monthly volunteer meetings.** As noted, the coordinator will hold monthly meetings for the volunteers to provide a forum for sharing successes and concerns, as well as for offering further training as the need arises.

**Technical assistance with literacy issues.** The coordinator will also be available throughout the project to answer volunteers' requests for on-the-spot assistance with basic skills training issues. In this way, tutors don't have to wait until the next monthly meeting before using a new method or materials with their learners.

**Provision of materials.** The project provides some basic skills training materials for volunteers to use. However, because resources are limited, youth may not always be able to take materials with them after a tutoring or drop-in session. Volunteers will endeavor to make use of readily available "real-world" materials as often as possible. This grounds the training in everyday life and makes it more immediately relevant. Every effort will be made to have an adequate supply of appropriate training materials.

**Evaluation of the training.** As noted, your input regarding the youths' responses to the training will be an important part of the evaluation of this project. The coordinator will seek out the youths' perceptions through you and will appreciate your own views on the utility and effectiveness of the training provided to the youth you case manage.

This evaluation will take place both while the tutoring, helping and workshops are being carried out, as well as after a youth has accomplished his/her goal or has left the training under other circumstances, or after a series of workshops has been completed. Because this is a new approach, the evaluation of its effectiveness is most critical.

## Welcome to the Team

As a case manager of an agency participating in Takin' It to the Streets, you are part of a team working on an exciting new project that may have important implications for basic skills training for street youth -- both here and in other communities as well. We welcome you and look forward to collaborating with you as we work to find creative ways to meet the special needs of street youth for basic skills training.

**Your Role in This Basic Skills Training**

**A Checklist For You**

For **One-on-One/Small Group Tutoring**, you:

1. Meet with the volunteer on his/her first visit to your agency and clarify mutual expectations, facilities, and responsibilities.
2. Identify youth who may be interested or who may benefit from tutoring.
3. Encourage them to participate -- kindle their interest.
4. Help the project coordinator match youth with tutor and introduce them.
5. Provide the tutor with relevant information about the youth's educational background, training experiences and needs, and interests and goals.
6. Monitor the youth's responses to the training:
   - encourage his/her participation;
   - check the tutor's activity logs;
   - trouble-shoot;
   - watch for changes, emerging needs or interests.
7. Meet regularly with the tutor (no less than 1x/mo.)
8. Give the tutor feedback about topics or approaches that might work better.
9. Help to evaluate the training.

For **Drop-in Helping/Topical Workshops**, you:

1. Make sure you know what activities are available, when and where.
2. Spread the word to all the youth you have contact with.
3. Encourage individual youth to participate.
4. Suggest topics or activities to the proper coordinator as you identify new needs or interests.
5. Listen to the responses of the youth around you:
   - identify what works (what was popular, fun, useful);
   - watch for signs of problems or disinterest.
6. Provide feedback to the project coordinator and/or the volunteer.

**Is This Training Appropriate for Your Client?**

**A Checklist of Participant Characteristics**

Takin' It to the Streets basic skills training is for youth who:

- o don't have the basic skills necessary to qualify for existing youth training programs,
- o don't have the test-taking skills to be admitted to such programs,
- o don't have the interest, motivation, self-confidence to enroll and participate in available training opportunities, and/or
- o experience too many other barriers in their present lives to be able to benefit from existing forms of training (barriers such as lack of stable residence, adequate physical and mental health, supportive mentors and peers, survival level income, etc.).

**One-on-One/Small Group Tutoring** is for youth who:

- o feel a need to read, write or do math better (but may not have a specific goal), or
- o want individual help with a specific goal, and
- o are willing to commit to regular meetings with a tutor over a period of time.

Examples of youths' interests or motivation include, but are not limited to:

specific reading, writing or math problems (spelling, poor phonics, low level skills, etc.)

pre-GED preparation

job search skills

getting a driver's license

being able to read specific subject matter (books for one's children, newspapers, want ads, magazines, hobby manuals, etc.)

Remember: A youth does not need to request a tutor to be a likely candidate for this training.

**Drop-in Helping/Topical Workshops** are for youth who:

- o who are interested in a particular topic or activity,or
- o need to improve their basic skills, but
  - do not have regular schedules or are unwilling or unable to commit to a schedule,
  - are reluctant to acknowledge that they need to improve their skills,
  - are unwilling to participate in any training remotely resembling school, and/or
  - are uncertain about making contact with working with new adults.

Drop-in helping is also useful for youth who:

- have a specific literacy task with which they need immediate assistance, or
- have specific basic skills related questions that don't require tutoring over time.

**Acknowledgments**

This manual for case managers is a companion volume to *Basic Skills Training for Street Youth: A Manual for Volunteer Tutors* developed by Karen Reed Wikelund and Nancy Faires Conklin (Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1989). Both are products of Taking' It to the Streets, a basic skills training project for street youth. The project was funded by the Fred Meyer Charitable Trust to demonstrate a new model for providing basic skills training for these young people.

Many people made these training manuals possible.

We wish to thank the Fred Meyer Charitable Trust for the opportunity to demonstrate our training ideas.

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We would like to direct the reader to the published, revised and expanded, version of the Project LUCK training manual: *In and Out of Street Life: A Reader on Interventions with Street Youth*, Debra Boyer, Editor and Contributor (Portland, OR: Project LUCK, 1988). The LUCK manual is available for $10.00 from the Tri-County Youth Services Consortium, 2000 S.W. First, Suite 100, Portland, Oregon 97201.

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